

VZCZCXRO8257  
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHUJA #2064/01 2911416  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 171416Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4218  
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0098  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002064

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR OES/ENV FOR PRATHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [TRGY](#) [KRVC](#) [TPHY](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: U.S. EPA SUPPORT FOR LANDFILL METHANE RECOVERY

¶1. Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Landfill Methane Outreach Program Manager, Swarupa Ganguli, attended the International Renewable Energy Conference (IREC) from October 6-9 in Abuja. She delivered a presentation on "Landfill Gas to Energy Experience in the U.S. and other Countries," and visited the EPA's Methane to Market (M2M) Partnership Program projects in Abuja. (Note: Nigeria is the only M2M partner country in Africa. End Note). EPA inventory assistance has provided Abuja city officials with useful information to better manage the city's dump sites, advance energy security, and mitigate adverse environmental and health impacts. The ensuing U.S.-Nigeria collaboration may lead to involvement by U.S. companies in methane gas recovery and utilization for energy generation. End Summary.

IREC

¶2. Ganguli highlighted the objectives and benefits of the M2M program, which is to recover and use landfill methane for power generation, thereby advancing energy security and economic growth while improving local air quality and public health. She not only outlined the scientific, technical, and logistical steps involved in establishing a successful methane to market program, but also discussed current USG assistance efforts with Nigeria. The Managing Director of the Lagos West Management Authority (LWMA), who attended the same conference, noted that waste management and associated environmental concerns cause significant challenges and opportunities in Nigeria, particularly in the major population centers such as Lagos, where an estimated 18 million people live. According to Ganguli, the EPA has funded the first inventory of Nigerian dumpsites in order to evaluate the potential for methane gas recovery and utilization for energy generation. The dump sites are Mpape, Gosa, Ajata, and Kubwa in the Abuja area and Olushosun and Abul Egba in the Lagos area. Based on these initial assessments, Ganguli commented that Mpape is seen as a possible candidate for a further feasibility study. She reported that in late September, the EPA granted a local Nigerian NGO \$90,000 to conduct further studies at Mpape and other sites.

Mpape: Potential Site for Methane Recovery

¶3. On October 7, 2008 ESTHoff accompanied Ganguli and the director of a local environmental NGO on a site visit to the Mpape landfill located at the outskirts of Abuja. The site was opened in 1989 and closed in 2005 after it ran out of space. Engineer Hassan Dogon-Daji, the Director of Waste Management for the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB), provided a tour of the site and an adjoining transit center, which is under construction. According to Dogon-Daji, the Mpape landfill was an abandoned quarry before it was turned into a landfill, but it had not been properly lined to protect against toxic seepage.

¶4. The team noted that decomposing buried waste is visibly producing leachate, which is collecting in a pond nearby and likely seeping into and polluting the groundwater and a nearby stream. Many of the nearby residents rely on this same groundwater. According to Dogon-Daji, although samples were collected and sent six months ago

to the Abuja Water Board for testing, results are still unavailable.

As an interim measure, ESTHOff suggested periodic collection and transportation of the leachate for treatment at the city's water treatment plant, which Dogon-Daji promised to facilitate. The team also observed gas bubbling through cracks in the ground, a possible sign of ongoing methane generation.

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Gosa: Abuja's New Dumpsite

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¶5. After the closure of the Mpape dumpsite in 2005, Abuja city officials opened a new 90 hectares dumpsite in Gosa, an hour's drive from the city. Dogon-Daji reported that Abuja city has developed a plan for converting this facility into a proper sanitary landfill. (Note: The plan has yet to be funded by the federal government before it can be implemented. End Note). The city plans to use Mpape as a waste sorting and processing facility before final transport to Gosa. In addition, under the plan, the city will introduce proper trash sorting at the source, starting with major businesses, governmental facilities and eventually moving to individual homes.

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Comment

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¶6. Ganguli's participation in the IREC showcased USG assistance in tackling waste management problems and mitigating the associated environmental and health ramifications. EPA inventory assistance has provided Abuja city officials with useful information for better managing the city's dumpsites and mitigating their adverse environmental and health impact. There may be future additional

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opportunities for U.S. companies to engage in methane gas recovery and energy generation in both Abuja and Lagos.

¶7. Ganguli did not clear this cable before departing.

¶8. This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.

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